

1875, p. 384, pl. ix. f. 2). This bird must therefore stand as *Serphophaga caloptera*, Mr. Lawrence's name being a synonym. The position of *S. pæcilocerca* and *S. caloptera* in the genus *Serphophaga* is open to question, as their affinity to members of the genus *Ochthæca* is obvious. The last-named bird has already been assigned to *Ochthæca* by Taczanowski (P. Z. S. 1879, p. 233).

On the Plate the type of *T. spodioptila* is figured (fig. 1), and also the type specimens of *T. humeralis* (figs. 2 male and fig. 3 female), the latter obtained by Mr. Buckley near Sarayacu, in Ecuador.

XXIII.—Notes on a 'Catalogue of the Accipitres in the British Museum' by R. Bowdler Sharpe (1874). By J. H. GURNEY.

[Continued from p. 124.]

THE genus *Harpagus* would seem to be most naturally followed by the group of oriental Dwarf Falcons, or Falconets as they have been sometimes called, for which Vigors in 1824 proposed the generic appellation of *Hierax*; but this name having been preoccupied, has been changed by Mr. Sharpe to *Microhierax*, which will no doubt be henceforward accepted as the title of the genus.

In three species of *Microhierax*, viz. *M. eutolmus*, *M. fringillarius*, and *M. erythrogeus*, there is, in some specimens, a bidentation of the mandible, almost as complete as in the genus *Harpagus*; but in most individuals the hinder tooth is merely represented by a sinuation, more or less strongly pronounced and sometimes scarcely noticeable; and it is a curious circumstance that this variation does not in the genus *Microhierax* appear to be dependent upon age, but to be simply a matter of individual peculiarity.

I have not examined the bills of *M. melanoleucus* and of *M. sinensis*, or of more than two specimens of *M. latifrons*. In one of the last-named birds the hinder tooth was absent; and in the other it was represented by a sinuation, which, though perceptible, could not properly be called a tooth.

The White-naped Falconet (*M. eutolmus* of Jerdon, ex Hodgson) is thought by Mr. Sharpe to be probably the original of Edwards's "Little Black and Orange-coloured Hawk" *, and on that account appears in his catalogue under the title of "*Microhierax caerulescens*;" but I agree with the opinion expressed by Mr. Hume in 'Stray Feathers,' vol. v. p. 126, that the absence of the white nuchal collar in Edwards's figure and the statement in his text that the bird from which he drew it had the "upper side of the neck . . . black, shining with a blue and purplish gloss," is fatal to the identification proposed by Mr. Sharpe. The suggestion of Mr. Hume that Edwards's plate represents a phase of plumage of *M. melanoleucus* which, from the rarity of that species, is as yet unknown to modern naturalists, seems to me to be a more feasible one; but in any case I think it would be best to allow the specific name of *caerulescens* to remain in abeyance, and to use for the White-naped Falconet that of *eutolmus*, under which it was first indicated by Hodgson and subsequently described by Jerdon.

Specimens of *M. eutolmus* from countries lying to the east of the Bay of Bengal have the white frontal band and nuchal collar broader than is the case in specimens from Northern India; Mr. Hume also observes that in the former "the white spot, which forms the representative of the fifth bar on the inner web of the outer tail-feathers, approaches much nearer to the point of the feather" than in the latter; and he gives measurements, taken from several dissected specimens, from which it appears that the distance of this spot from the tip of the feather varies in Himalayan males from 0·68 to 1·1 inch, in Himalayan females from 0·55 to 0·87, in Pegu and Tenasserim males from 0·35 to 0·43, and in Pegu and Tenasserim females from 0·37 to 0·50.

The Norwich Museum possesses two adult, or nearly adult, specimens from Nepal which show a curious variation from the Himalayan examples cited by Mr. Hume: in one of them the lowest spot on the outer rectrice to the left is ·80 inch from the tip of the feather, while on the external rec-

* *Vide* Edwards's Nat. Hist. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 108.

trice to the right the lowest spot is only $\cdot 44$ from the tip, this spot being a very small one and there being no corresponding spot on the left-hand rectrice; in the other Nepalese specimen the lowest spot on each of the external pair of rectrices is distant $\cdot 50$ from the tip of the feather, both these spots are extremely small, and that on the right-hand rectrice is very indistinct, and in fact nearly obsolete.

The only specimen of *M. eulomus* which I have seen from the more southern parts of India is one that I purchased many years ago for the Norwich Museum from Mr. Leadbeater, at that time a leading birdstuffer in London, who informed me, and, I believe, correctly, that it had been obtained at Bangalore. In this specimen the nuchal collar is as narrow as in examples from Nepal, the frontal band and the white markings on the sides of the head are intermediate in width between these and specimens from Burmah; but the tail resembles the latter, the lowest spot on each rectrice of the outer pair being well marked and only $\cdot 40$ of an inch from the tip of the feather.

I may add that the Norwich Museum possesses an example from Camboja which does not differ from those obtained in Burmah.

The changes of plumage which occur in *M. eulomus* have been carefully explained by Mr. Hume in 'Stray Feathers,' vol. v. p. 127; and some interesting details of the nidification of both this species and of *M. fringillarius* will be found at p. 80 of the same volume.

With regard to *M. erythrogegens*, the species peculiar to the Philippine Islands, I may remark that it was received and recorded by the late Lord Tweeddale from three of the islands of that group, Luzon, Zebu, and Mindanao*. I examined the female specimen received by Lord Tweeddale from Monte Alban in Luzon, and found the wing-measurement $4\cdot 3$ inches; and I find that in two specimens (sex undetermined) from Manilla in the Norwich Museum the corresponding measurements are respectively $4\cdot 3$ and $4\cdot 4$ inches. The female obtained by Lord Tweeddale from Zebu was recorded as

* Vide P. Z. S. 1877, pp. 689, 757, 937.

having a longer wing-measure, viz. 4·87. The measurements of the male and female which Mr. Everett obtained for Lord Tweeddale at Zamboanga, in Mindanao, have unfortunately not been recorded.

With regard to the most abundant species of the genus *Microhierax*, *M. fringillarius*, I have nothing to add to the information contained in Mr. Sharpe's work; and the same remark applies to the remaining species there mentioned, the very rare *M. melanoleucus*. But I may briefly allude to two additional species of the genus which have been made known to science subsequently to the publication of Mr. Sharpe's volume. One of these, a native of China, has been described by Mr. Sharpe in 'The Ibis,' for 1875, p. 254, under the title of *M. sinensis*, and in the work of Messrs. David and Oustalet on the birds of China, where it is also figured, under that of *M. chinensis*. At p. 31 of the latter work M. David mentions three specimens obtained by himself in the province of Kiangsi, and a fourth which had been previously procured by M. Heude in the neighbourhood of Nankin. These are the only examples of this species of which I have heard.

The second new species, *M. latifrons*, was described by Mr. Sharpe in 'The Ibis,' for 1879, p. 237, where it is also figured; this species is a native of Borneo, but, judging from Bornean collections, would seem to be less abundant there than its widely spread congener *M. fringillarius*. Mr. Whitely, of Woolwich, well known as a dealer in ornithological specimens, has also received two skins of this species from the Nicobar Islands, one of which has passed into the collection of Count Turati at Milan, and the other into that of the Norwich Museum. Being desirous of ascertaining whether these two examples had been really obtained in the Nicobars, I wrote to Mr. Whitely on the subject, and was favoured by him with the following reply:—"The person I receive the birds from at the Nicobars has never been to Borneo; his business lies between the Nicobars and the Andamans; from the Andamans he has not yet sent me any thing; all I have received came from the Nicobars. In the collection were specimens of *Calœnas nicobarica*, *Macropygia rufipennis*,

Myristicivora spilorrhoea, &c. I have faith in the collector that he would not deceive me."

The genus *Microhierax* is followed in Mr. Sharpe's volume by that of *Poliohierax*, which, for many years, was only composed of one sparsely distributed African species; but in 1871 the very interesting discovery was made of a second species inhabiting Burma. The African species, *P. semitorquatus*, is nearly as small as the Falconets of the genus *Microhierax*; but the Burman *P. insignis* is considerably larger, though also quite one of the smaller Falconidæ. The character of the plumage is curiously the same in both species, the adult males being grey on the back, whilst the females have the upper part of the back rufous; but in *P. insignis* this colour is brighter than in *P. semitorquatus*, and extends to the head*.

The adult male of *P. semitorquatus* is figured in Sir A. Smith's 'Illustrations of South African Zoology,' Aves, pl. i., and the female or young male in 'The Ibis' for 1861, pl. 12; both sexes of *P. insignis* are figured in the late Mr. Rowley's 'Ornithological Miscellany,' vol. iii. pl. 103.

It may, perhaps, be desirable to point out that *P. semitorquatus*, besides occurring in North-eastern and South-eastern Africa, as mentioned in Mr. Sharpe's volume, has also been observed in Great Namaqua and Damara Land (*vide* Andersson's 'Birds of Damara Land,' p. 19).

With regard to *P. insignis*, Mr. Hume's remarks on its variations of plumage, incident to age and sex, and Captain Feilden's on its habits (both in 'Stray Feathers,' vol. iii. pp. 20, 21, 22), should be referred to; the article by the late Lord Tweeddale accompanying the plate of this species in the 'Ornithological Miscellany' should also be consulted.

Still following the order in which the genera are arranged in Mr. Sharpe's volume, we arrive next at the genus *Spizapteryx*, containing a single very scarce South-American

* It is a remarkable coincidence that a very similar coloration of each sex, involving a corresponding difference between the male and female, exists in a widely distant Raptorial form, *Buteo erythronotus* of South America.

species, *S. circumcinctus*, of which, so far as I am aware, nothing is known beyond what is contained in Mr. Sharpe's article on this species and in that by Dr. Sclater in 'The Ibis' for 1862, p. 23, the latter also embodying Dr. Kaup's original description contained in the P. Z. S. for 1851, p. 43. Dr. Kaup there mentions that the type specimen was obtained by Mr. Bridges in Chili; and if this was really so, Mr. Sharpe is not quite accurate in stating that the species is "confined to the Argentine Republic," though it is recorded from thence by Professor Burmeister, as cited in Dr. Sclater's article above referred to; and Messrs. Salvin and Godman's specimen, of which Mr. Sharpe gives the description and measurements, was also obtained in that Republic, its locality being Mendoza; I may add that this specimen was marked by the collector as a female.

Dr. Kaup in describing the type specimen speaks of it as belonging to a subgenus characterized, *inter alia*, by the possession of "two slender indistinct teeth;" but an excellent life-size drawing of the type specimen by Mr. Wolf, which is in my possession and which was the original of the figure contained in 'The Ibis' for 1862, though it shows two somewhat indistinctly marked festoons on the side of the mandible, represents them as very obtuse, and by no means corresponding with Dr. Kaup's epithet of "slender." I may add that the specimen in the collection of Messrs. Salvin and Godman possesses but one such festoon on the tomium, and that by no means strongly marked, and hardly meriting the designation of a tooth.

As regards the New-Zealand genus *Harpa* and the Australian *Hieracidea*, to both which it may be most convenient here to refer, I can add nothing worthy of record to the articles contained in Mr. Sharpe's volume and to his remarks on the birds of the former genus contained in 'The Ibis' for 1873, p. 327. It is much to be regretted that the New-Zealand Hawks which reach this country very seldom have the sex noted as ascertained by dissection. Such information would be very serviceable in distinguishing between the two species of the genus *Harpa*, as the males of the larger and

the females of the smaller apparently differ but little in size. The larger of the two species (*H. novæ-zealandiæ*) would seem to have become very scarce; and I know no recent instance of its having been sent to this country.

I propose now to consider the cluster of species which Mr. Sharpe has associated under the generic title of *Cerchneis*, and which appears to me to include three natural groups sufficiently distinct to be treated as at least separate subgenera, bearing the several names of *Dissodectes*, *Tinnunculus*, and *Erythropus*.

The subgeneric name *Dissodectes* was proposed by Mr. Selater in the P. Z. S. for 1864, p. 248, for the following species—*D. ardesiacus*, *D. dickinsoni* *, and *D. zoniventris*; MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier introduce into their article on the last-named species the following apposite remarks, which are equally applicable to the other two members of the subgenus † :—"Le faucon à ventre rayé a les ailes courtes et n'appartient point par conséquent au sous-genre *Hypotriorchis*, . . . ce n'est pas non plus un *Æsalon*; sans sa coloration spéciale, il se rattacherait plutôt au genre de Crécerelles; son bec gros et fort, ses pattes puissantes, et surtout sa queue allongée rappellent en effet, tout en les exagérant, certains caractères de ce groupe, trop naturel cependant pour qu'on y introduise, sous peine d'en rompre l'uniformité, un oiseau aussi dissemblable sous le rapport du plumage."

Mr. Selater (*l. c.*), after describing the type specimens of *D. dickinsoni*, adds the following remark :—"The general form of this bird is completely that of *Falco ardesiacus* (Vieill.) of Western Africa; together with that bird and *Falco zoniventris*, Peters, of Madagascar, it evidently forms a distinct section among the Hobbies (*Hypotriorchis*), for

* Mr. Sharpe gives this name as "*Dickersoni*," following an error of my own in 'The Ibis' for 1869, p. 444; but Dr. Selater assures me that the name of the discoverer of this species was correctly given in his original description of the bird as Dickinson, and the specific name must therefore stand as *dickinsoni*.

† *Vide* Ois. de Madagascar, vol. i. p. 35.

which I suggest the subgeneric name *Dissodectes*, indicating thereby the peculiarity of their double-toothed mandible, a feature in which they resemble the *Harpagi* of South America."

This peculiarity, however, is by no means a constant characteristic of the subgenus *Dissodectes*: although observed by Mr. Selater in *D. dickinsoni*, it is not present in all specimens of that species; and though distinctly indicated in MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier's figure of the adult of *D. zoniventris**, an immature specimen of that species in the Norwich Museum has the hinder tooth merely represented by a slight sinuation. Such is likewise the case in two specimens out of three of *D. dickinsoni* in the same collection, whilst in the third the hinder tooth is absolutely wanting, as it also is in all the examples (three in number) of *D. ardesiacus* which are there preserved.

The colour of the iris in the birds of this subgenus seems also to be somewhat variable, not only as between the different species, but in some instances even between different individuals of the same species.

Von Heuglin speaks of *D. ardesiacus* as "iride umbrinâ"†; and Barbozadu Bocage, on the authority of Anchieta, describes its iris as chestnut-coloured ("châtain")‡. On the same authority he mentions the iris in *D. dickinsoni* as being brown§, and elsewhere as chestnut-coloured ("castanho")||. Dr. Dickinson described the iris of the last-named species as "dark brown"¶; but a specimen obtained by Dr. Miller in the Zambesi country and preserved in the Norwich Museum was noted by the collector as having the iris "light orange;" and that this is not an impossible variation may perhaps be inferred from the circumstance of the nearly allied *D. zoniventris* being said by MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier to have the iris "d'un beau jaune"**.

Mr. Sharpe gives the habitat of *D. ardesiacus* as "Western

* Ois. de Madagascar, vol. i. pl. 10. † Orn. N.O.-Afr. vol. i. p. 34.

‡ Orn. d'Angola, vol. i. p. 54. § Orn. d'Angola, vol. i. p. 55.

|| 19th List of Birds of Portuguese West Africa, p. 3.

¶ Ibis, 1864, p. 305.

** Ois. de Madagascar, vol. i. p. 35.

and North-western Africa," but does not refer to its Eastern range, except incidentally by including in the list of specimens at the British Museum one from Bogos Land, where, according to Von Heuglin, it is resident, as also about Lake Tana and on the Blue and White Niles*.

The Leyden and Norwich Museums contain specimens from Nubia, and that of Brussels one obtained in Arabia†.

In Western Africa *D. ardesiacus* is found as far north as the river Gambia, specimens from thence being preserved in the British and Leyden Museums; whilst on the other side of the equator it has been found to extend to the southern parts of Angola in the vicinity of the river Cunéné‡.

The geographical range of the other two species of *Disodectes* is much more limited than that of *D. ardesiacus*; but that of *D. dickinsoni* nevertheless extends across the African continent, it having been originally obtained in the Zambesi district of East Africa, and subsequently in West Africa at Caconda in Benguela§, where it appears, in very numerous flocks, in the month of August, the time of the forest-fires, chasing the insects which are disturbed by the flames.

The remaining species of the subgenus, *D. zoniventris*, appears to be entirely confined to Madagascar.

XXIV.—Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.

[Continued from p. 169.]

33. *Agassiz's Report on the Museum of Comparative Zoology.*

[Annual Report of the Curator of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College for 1879–80. Cambridge: 1880.]

The report gives a most gratifying account of the progress of this noble institution. During the twenty years that have

* Orn. N.O.-Afr. vol. i. p. 35.

† Schlegel, Mus. des Pays-Bas, Falcones, p. 21.

‡ Du Bocage, Orn. d'Angola, vol. i. p. 54.

§ Du Bocage, Orn. d'Angola, vol. i. p. 55; also 17th List of Birds of Portuguese West Africa, p. 9, 19th List, p. 3, and 20th List, p. 15.